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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-01
SSM-03 SSO-00 SIG-01 MMO-01 SS-15 INR-07 PA-01
CIAE-00 INRE-00 /076 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. COLLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. REUTHER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
----------102967 272300Z /65
O 272216Z JUL 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO

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AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 27, 1977

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE EX-
CERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 27, 1977:
FYI ONLY, THE OFFICER DOING THE BRIEFING TODAY WAS HODDING
CARTER.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE REPORTS THAT THE ADMINIS-
TRATION IS PROPOSING TO SELL EGYPT 200 MILLION DOLLARS IN
MILITARY RECONNAISSANCE AND TRANSPORT PLANES?

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A. I HAVE A LIMITED RESPONSE TO THAT. THIS MATTER IS
CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THE
MATTER BEING THE ADMINISTRATION DESIRE TO PROVIDE MORE
C-130S AND NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT TO EGYPT. UNTIL FORMAL
NOTIFICATION IS GIVEN TO CONGRESS, HOWEVER, THESE DIS-
CUSSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND I WOULD PREFER TO WITHHOLD
DETAILS UNTIL THEY ARE CONCLUDED. I WOULD NOTE, HOWEVER,
THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS ENDED HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE
SOVIET UNION AND HAS EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO DIVERSIFY
EGYPTIAN ARMS SUPPLIES. WE SEE IT CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST
TO ASSIST HIM WHERE POSSIBLE.

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM THE BALLPARK FIGURE?

A. I REALLY CAN'T. I REALLY CAN'T GO INTO DETAILS ON
IT. I AM NOT GOING TO ARGUE ABOUT THE STORY. I SIMPLY
CAN'T CONFIRM THE FIGURES.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE SUM OF MONEY, 200 MILLION DOLLARS?

A. I MEAN, I WOULD JUST SIMPLY SAY ON BACKGROUND THAT
THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH, BUT I CAN'T GO ANY FATHER THAN THAT.
END BACKGROUND. -

Q. IS THIS NOW COMING TO BE ANOTHER CONDITION IN THE
ADMINISTRATION'S ARMS SALES POLICE WHICH WASN'T MENTIONED

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IN THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT -- WHICH IS THAT WHEREVER POSSIBLE, WHEN WE CAN WEAN SOMEBODY OFF THE SOVIET ARMS SUPPLY, WE WILL DO SO WITH AMERICAN ARMS?

A. NO. I WOULD HESITATE TO ANNOUNCE THAT AS A COMPONENT OF POLICY. I WOULD THINK THAT WHAT IS A COMPONENT OF POLICY IS THAT ARMS DECISIONS WILL ALSO BE TAKEN, AS I RECALL, IN VIEW OF OUR OWN STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND SENSE OF SECURITY INTEREST. NOW, I'M REALLY NOT GOING TO TRY TO WRITE THE CODICIL HERE THAT, YOU KNOW, MIGHT GO TO THE
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QUESTION YOU'RE RAISING.

Q. --FOLLOWING UP THIS, WHEN PRESIDENT SADAT ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES -- I BELIEVE IT WAS LAST APRIL -- PRESIDENT CARTER WELCOMED HIM BY DESCRIBING SADAT WITH WHAT I RECALL WAS VERY HIGH PRAISE -- AS A RESPONSIBLE LEADER. AM I CORRECT IN THIS RECOLLECTION?

A. YES. I BELIEVE RESPONSIBLE, MODERATE.

Q. O.K. AND THE SECRETARY HAS HAD NO CAUSE TO DISAGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT?

A. NO.

Q. THEN THE SECRETARY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT IS IN ANY WAY IRRESPONSIBLE FOR PRESIDENT SADAT TO DESCRIBE COLONEL QUADDAFI OF LIBYA AS "THE LIBYAN LUNATIC, A CHILD WHO THINKS HE'S A SECOND NAPOLEON?"

A. WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON THE REFERENCES IN THE PRESS OR OTHERWISE BETWEEN ONE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT OR STATE AND ANOTHER.

Q. WELL, WOULD YOU REGARD IT AS UNREASONABLE, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT THE SECRETARY AGREES WITH THE PRESIDENT IN HIS HIGH PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT SADAT AS A RESPONSIBLE LEADER, WHO HAS DESCRIBED THIS MAN IN THIS WAY? IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S JUST A NO COMMENT? YOU DON'T BELIEVE SADAT IS WRONG?

A. I SIMPLY HAVE NO COMMENT ON THE COMMENTS BY THE PEOPLE.

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Q. YOU USED A LINE BEFORE. YOU SAID SADAT ENDED, I

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THINK YOU SAID, HIS DEPENDENCE UPON THE SOVIET UNION AND WANTS TO DIVERSITY HIS ARMS SUPPLY. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT KNOW AS A FACT THAT THAT DEPENDENCE HAS ENDED? IN OTHER WORDS, ARE THOSE SUPPLIES GOING INTO EGYPT FROM THE SOVIET UNION OF ANY KIND?

A. THE LAST I REMEMBER ON THIS, AND I THINK MAYBE IT WAS RAISED BEFORE: WE DON'T HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF DIRECT SUPPLYING GOING ON. I DON'T SAY "DIRECT" IN A CUTE WAY OF SAYING " INDIRECT." I DON'T SEE -- I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF THEIR BEING SUPPLIED WITH NEW WEAPONRY OF THE SORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

Q. OF ANY KIND?

A. I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY EVIDENCE YET. I WILL, HOWEVER, GET AN UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR YOU -- ASK THAT QUESTION DIRECTLY.

Q. COULD YOU ASK WHEN WE KNOW THE LAST SUPPLIES WENT IN?

A. YES. I THINK, YOU KNOW, WHEN WE WENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN FEBRUARY, THAT THING CAME UP THEN AND WE DISCUSSED IT; BUT I' LL CHECK.

Q. COULD YOU ADD THE ELEMENT OF SPARE PARTS AND RESUPPLY?

A. YES. I'LL DO THE BASIC THING AND SEE WHAT I CAN GET. I REALLY HAVEN'T ADDRESSED THAT ONE IN A WHILE.

Q. WILL SAUDI ARABIA SUPPLY THE MONEY, WHATEVER THAT MONEY IS?

A. I DON'T KNOW. AGAIN, I SAW THAT SPECULATION -- YOU KNOW, THAT THE MONEY WOULD COME LIKE THIS. I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW THAT, AND I DON'T KNOW THAT WE KNOW ANYTHING OF THE

SORT.

Q. BUT IT WILL BE A CASH SALE, NOT A FOREIGN MILITARY CREDIT SALE?

A. THAT WOULD BE THE IDEA.

Q. SINCE THE UNITED STATES IS OBVIOUSLY THE SOLE SUPPLIER TO ONE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WHY DOESN'T THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDER THE SAME APPROACH TO PROVIDING ARMS FOR EGYPT, THAT IT DOES TOWARDS SOMALIA?

A. WHICH IS --

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Q. YOU SAID YOU ARE WILLING TO JOIN A GROUP OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO BECOME A UNILATERAL SUPPLIER OF BOTH SIDES IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. WHY WOULDN'T YOU TRY TO INTERNATIONALIZE IT?

A. I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, FIRST. SECOND, I AM NOT AT ALL SURE, HOWEVER, THAT THE BASIS FOR THAT QUESTION IS CORRECT -- I.E. THAT WE WOULD BE THE ONLY SUPPLIER FOR EGYPT. I AM NOT SURE THAT THAT IS TRUE. BUT I COULD GIVE YOU A FACETIOUS ANSWER, WHICH THAT DIFFERENT BUREAUS CAME UP WITH DIFFERENT WORDINGS FOR WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME PROBLEM. BUT I AM NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THAT.

Q. BUT WHY CASH, AND NOT CREDIT IN THE CASE OF EGYPT, WHEREAS, WITH SOMALIA --

A. I REALLY THINK I HAD BETTER EVEN WITHDRAW FROM THAT ANSWER THAT I GAVE ON THE CASH AND CREDIT. BECAUSE WHERE I REALLY AM IS THAT UNTIL WE ARE THROUGH WITH OUR DIS-
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CUSSIONS WITH CONGRESS, I AM NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE -- SORT OF THE WHOLE RANGE OF THESE ISSUES -- EXCEPT TO CONFIRM THAT THOSE DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING FORWARD.

Q. ARE YOU HOPING TO COMPLETE THE DISCUSSIONS BEFORE THE SECRETARY LEAVES FOR THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q. COULD YOU CHECK THAT?

A. YES, SURE.

Q. WAS PRIME MINISTER BEGIN INFORMED OF THESE DISCUSSIONS WHEN HE WAS HERE? AND DID HE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THEM?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT. I BELIEVE THEY PROBABLY DISCUSSED A VERY WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES, AND WHILE WE HAVEN'T GONE INTO SPECIFICS OF WHAT THEY DISCUSSED (I MEAN AS TO HOW DEEP THEY GOT INTO IT) I THINK I HAD BETTER HOLD THAT, RATHER THAN TRY TO SPECULATE, AND SEE WHAT I CAN GET ON IT.

Q. MR. BEGIN IS REPORTED TODAY TO BE REJECTING THE AMERI-CAN CRITICISM OF HIS -- OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION -- THAT THE WEST BANK TERRITORIES ARE NOT OCCUPIED, BUT "LIBERATED," AND THEREFORE, THE INTERNATIONAL LAW CITED YESTERDAY DOESN'T APPLY. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THIS?

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A. NO. I THINK ACTUALLY, WHAT AMBASSADOR DINITZ SAID YESTERDAY PROBABLY COVERS THIS. OUR POSITION ON THIS IS CLEAR. MR. BEGIN HAS MADE HIS POSITION CLEAR. AND FOR US TO GO ON DEBATING THIS PUBLICLY AT THIS POINT IS NOT USEFUL.

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Q. WELL SPECIFICALLY, MR. BEGIN SAYS THERE IS NO VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW -- WHICH WOULD BE IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION TO WHAT YOU AND THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY. YOU MAINTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A VIOLATION OF LAW?

A. YES, I KNOW. WE HAVE NO REASON TO COME DOWN OFF OF WHAT WAS SAID YESTERDAY.

Q. DO YOU HAVE THE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE SECRETARY'S TRIP YET?

A. WELL, I CAN TELL YOU WE ARE LEAVING AT 10:00 PM SUNDAY AND ARE COMING BACK THE 12TH; AND ARE GOING TO VISIT THE SAME COUNTRIES THAT WE VISITED IN FEBRUARY. WE WILL CONCLUDE IN LONDON ON THE 11TH AND 12TH. I THINK AT THIS POINT I AM NOT PREPARED TO GIVE A DETAILED BREAKDOWN ON THE RECORD OF THE DAY BY DAY.

Q. IS THERE A BEIRUT STOP? ALL THE SAME COUNTRIES?

A. ALL THE SAME COUNTRIES.

Q. THERE IS -- AT JERUSALEM -- ACCORDING TO A DAMASCUS PAPER, AFTER JERUSALEM THE SECRETARY WILL GO BACK TO DAMASCUS.

A. THAT IS VERY INTERESTING. I JUST LOOKED AT THE SCHEDULE TODAY AND I DON'T SEE ANYTHING OF THE SORT.

Q. IS IT FLEXIBLE AT THE END, THOUGH? IS THERE A POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER THINGS WILL HAPPEN?

A. THE ONLY THING I CAN NOTE IS -- AND I DON'T EVEN WANT
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TO RAISE A HINT HERE -- IS THAT WE ARE STAYING LONGER IN EACH PLACE THAN WE USED TO -- THAT IS WHILE WE WERE THERE IN FEBRUARY. BUT I SEE NO PLANS WHATSOEVER FOR SHUTTLING BACK AND FORTH.

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Q. THE RETURN DATE IS FIRM, THEN, IN OTHER WORDS.

A. AS OF RIGHT NOW, I SEE NO REASON TO CONCLUDE THAT WE WILL NOT GET BACK HERE ABOUT MID-AFTERNOON ON THE 12TH.

Q. WILL YOU NOT BE ANNOUNCING THE DETAILED SCHEDULE, THEN, AS A MATTER OF POLICY?

A. I THINK WE WILL COME DOWN TO A GENERAL STATEMENT ON THE SCHEDULE PRETTY SOON. BUT WHEN YOU SAY "DETAILED" WHEN YOU GO INTO DETAILS, YOU KNOW THE PROCEDURE. YOU WILL PROBABLY GET IT, THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ON THE PLANE, IF WE ARE FLYING INTO EACH TOWN.

VANCE

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